THE REGION OF ISOLATIONISM

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Isolationism, a persistent refrain in the history of American foreign policy, has received its full share of recent investigation.[1] These investigations have followed a number of approaches, varying from historical research into the interaction of isolationist and interventionist groups and individuals in the pre-World War II period to studies of the underlying causes of isolationist thinking. It is the purpose of this paper to consider one of the ambiguities that still remain; that is, the commonly accepted assumption that in recent decades the Midwest has been the hard core of isolationism.

Midwestern isolationism is actually only one part of the larger question concerning the existence of a regional or geographic isolationist sentiment. On the untested assumption that isolationism is regional has rested the geographic explanation that isolationism is strongest in interior states because of the sense of insulation from international affairs that such location fosters. In this paper certain non-regional factors will be examined for their possible relationship to geographical centers of isolationist strength. Non-regional, socio-political factors might actually form the basis for several separate studies, and their consideration here is only intended to be suggestive of the further limitations these factors impose on a simple geographic explanation of isolationism.

Problems of Definition. The terms in this subject are corrupted by popular usage yet still used by scholars. Neither "Midwest" nor "isolationism" has an exact meaning. The Midwest as defined by some scholars includes five states; as defined by others, it includes fifteen. The variations in definition are endless.[2] Howard Odum, who has devoted considerable attention to careful definition in his study of southern regions, includes eight states (Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio) in what he terms the "Middle States." Odum bases his definition on approximately seven hundred indices of socio-economic and political characteristics of states.[3] The Census Bureau, to

[1] For examples of recent inquiries, see Samuel Lubell, "Who Votes Isolationist and Why," *Harper's*, Vol. 202, pp. 29–36 (April, 1951), and *The Future of American Politics* (New York, 1952), pp. 129–57; Survey Research Center, *America's Role in World Affairs* (Ann Arbor, 1952); George L. Grassmuck, *Sectional Biases in Congress on Foreign Policy*, (Baltimore, 1951), pp. 133–74; Gabriel Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York, 1951); Thomas Bailey, *The Man in the Street* (New York, 1948), pp. 238–55; William Langer and S. Everett Gleason, *The Challenge to Isolation* (New York, 1952); Frederick Williams, "Regional Attitudes on International Cooperation," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 9, pp. 38–50 (Spring, 1945).

[2] See *Regionalism in America*, ed. Merrill Jensen (Madison, 1951). Though this entire collection of essays is relevant to the question of regional definitions, see particularly Vernon Carstensen, "The Development and Application of Regional-Sectional Concepts, 1900–1950," pp. 99–118.

[3] H. Odum, *Southern Regions of the United States* (Chapel Hill, 1936), Ch. 3; Also, H. Odum and H. Moore, *American Regionalism* (New York, 1938).

take another example, divides the nation into a West North Central group of seven states (Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, the Dakota's, Kansas, and Nebraska) and an East North Central group of five (Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio). For convenience, these two groups are commonly combined as the Midwest by those using census data.[4]

The variety of possible combinations does not end with these two. Cortez Ewing in his studies of presidential and congressional elections points out that by generous definition one could easily boost the number of possible regional combinations throughout the United States to more than a hundred.[5] Geographer Nevin M. Fenneman, heading a special committee of the Association of American Geographers organized to define the natural divisions of the United States, found eight physiographic divisions.[6] Other regional groupings appear in the writings of Arthur N. Holcombe, who found various regional patterns in his studies of political sectionalism.[7] The National Resources Committee in 1935 summarized the views of a panel of experts on regionalism in this manner:

> It seems to be agreed that regional boundaries are usually indefinite, being zones rather than lines. In the majority of instances, therefore, any boundaries which may be drawn will be necessarily arbitrary. It appears, however, that it is desirable to draw boundaries, providing their arbitrary nature be admitted.[8]

Most of the other studies defining national regions have recognized the problems noted in the Resources Committee's report. Some of them also mentioned the arbitrariness of following state boundaries in defining a region.

These difficulties in definition lead one to conclude that a region can be defined most usefully with limited criteria in mind. A geographer studying soils finds one regional pattern; a sociologist studying educational standards defines another; and a political scientist studying isolationist strength finds still another. Thus our question should not be "Is the Midwest the outstanding area of isolationist strength?", but rather "Is there any region of outstanding isolationist strength?" Then, after such an isolationist region is found (if possible),

[4] The Census Bureau's geographic divisions are most frequently used as the basis for regional designations because census data are so commonly used by regionalists.

[5] Cortez Ewing, *Presidential Elections* (Norman, Okla., 1940), p. 9. Ewing defines a seven state Midwest: Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

[6] Nevin M. Fenneman, "Physiographic Divisions of the United States," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 6, pp. 19–98 (1916).

[7] See his *The Political Parties of Today* (New York, 1924), pp. 105–9; *The Middle Classes in American Politics* (Cambridge, Mass., 1940), pp. 78–85; "Present Day Characteristics of American Political Parties," in *The American Political Scene*, ed. E. B. Logan (New York, 1938), Ch. 1; *Our More Perfect Union* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), p. 71. In 1924, Holcombe defined the Midwest as a combination of eleven states: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas. A different regional pattern was described in 1938 and 1940. In 1950, basing his delineation of regions on a new, non-political basis, Holcombe described a third regional pattern.

[8] National Resources Committee, *Regional Factors in National Planning* (Washington, 1935), p. 145. Thirty-four regional classifications, based on such varied criteria as retail shopping areas, soils, politics, and farm income, were presented in the Committee's report.

it can be compared to a consensus Midwest region derived from the definitions of those who use the phrase "midwestern isolationism."

The term "region" itself requires definition. A region includes only contiguous territory: though the region need not be symmetric or balanced, its component units must be connected and its area reasonably compact. Some common characteristic, in this case strong isolationist sentiment, binds the components together and separates the region from the surrounding area.

Isolationism offers similar problems of definition. Is isolationism accurately represented by the sentiments of John Adams when he wrote, "I confess I have sometimes thought that, after a few years, it will be the best thing we can do to recall every minister from Europe, and send embassies only on special occasions."?[9] Is it represented by the words of George Washington when in his Farewell Address he advised against political entanglement in the affairs of Europe? Or perhaps Thomas Jefferson's words, "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none," best serve to define American isolationism.[10] One finds considerable variety in sentiments which historically have been labeled "isolationist." Thus in 1934 isolationists were said to have opposed the Reciprocal Trade Agreements program, an economic matter, while in 1939 it was maintained that isolationists opposed fortification of Guam, a Far Eastern matter. Some isolationist sentiment was used to justify opposition in 1934 to the Inter-American Highway program, a Western Hemisphere matter. But spokesmen for what has been termed isolationism have in recent years included certain parts of Europe in the American defense sphere, and supposedly isolationist statements have included recommendations for the stationing of American troops and the maintenance of American bases around the world.[11]

Perhaps it is most accurate to consider isolationism as one end of a continuum, the other end of which can be considered anti-isolationism.[12] Though rare,

[9] *The Works of John Adams*, ed. C. F. Adams (Boston, 1853), Vol. 8, p. 37.

[10] *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. H. A. Washington (New York, 1861), Vol 8, p. 4.

[11] For example, in the Chicago *Tribune*, Feb. 1, 1951, a map of American defense zones and an accompanying editorial indicate that the United States should defend Spain, the British Isles, Africa, Iceland, and areas in the Far East and Southeast Asia as well as other points within the "Western Hemisphere Zone of Defense."

[12] For examples of definitions used by others writing on the subject, see Albert K. Weinberg, "The Historical Meaning of the American Doctrine of Isolation," this REVIEW, Vol. 34, pp. 539–47 (June, 1940); William C. Rogers, "Isolationist Propaganda (September, 1939—December 7, 1941)," unpubl. diss. (U. of Chicago, 1943), pp. 5–6; Charles A. Beard, *American Foreign Policy in the Making* (New Haven, 1946), p. 17; Raymond L. Buell, *Isolated America* (New York, 1940), p. 66; Richard W. Leopold, "The Mississippi Valley and American Foreign Policy, 1890–1941: An Assessment and an Appeal," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 37, pp. 625–42 (March, 1951); Nathaniel Peffer, *America's Place in the World* (New York, 1945), pp. 29–31; J. F. Rippy and A. Debo, *The Historical Background of the American Policy of Isolation*, in *Smith College Studies in History*, Vol. 9, p. 72 (1924). See also the Survey Research Center, *America's Role* (cited above, n. 1), for a definition similar to the one used here.

advocates of complete isolationism have probably existed—isolationism in its true sense of complete lack of intercourse with any other nation. Such extreme isolationists would advocate American abstention from participation in the international activities—political, economic, and social—of even the Western Hemisphere. The opposite extreme can be termed anti-isolationism (perhaps internationalism or interventionism). While the isolationist favors inaction and non-participation by the United States in world affairs, the opposite extremists would favor constant and world-wide American international action. At least one variety of anti-isolationist would consider the negation of nationalism in favor of world government as his goal. There are probably few people at either end of the scale. Furthermore, a man might be an isolationist on one type of issue and an anti-isolationist on another. An attitude of political isolationism might be combined with an economic internationalist position. A senator might support measures to increase American trade with other lands and yet oppose all other participation by the United States in world affairs. To the extent that he supports American withdrawal or non-participation he would be an isolationist. Whichever view dominates his voting in the Senate determines the group in which he would be counted. According to this definition, therefore, the more isolationist person believes that the role of the United States in world affairs should be more restricted, non-entangling and less active than that envisaged by the less isolationist viewpoint.

Votes in Congress As a Source of Data. What data can be used to determine whether an isolationist region existed during the past two decades? Three possible sources of data exist: election returns, public opinion polls, and congressional roll call votes. The third source, congressional roll call votes, is the most useful. Foreign policy issues in Congress were many and varied during the 1933 to 1950 period. Many of these issues were of the type to divide the members of Congress into more isolationist and less isolationist groups, and many of these produced roll call votes.

Though some objections can be raised to using these record votes to denote degrees of isolationism, none seem formidable. Certainly caution must be exercised in selecting the votes. Key amendments, motions to recommit, and borderline amendments must all be examined carefully. The issues themselves cannot be evaluated without investigation into the situation behind the mere wording of the proposal. However, when adequate care is observed in the selection of votes to be tabulated, sufficient data can be obtained from the voting in Congress to warrant considering one congressman or senator more isolationist than another.

Some objection might also be raised to transferring the voting record of a congressman to the district he represents. Does a congressman or senator vote his own mind, the mind of his party, or the mind of his constituency as he appraises it? If it is the mind of his constituency, and if the representative's appraisal is correct, then the transferral is valid. One of the basic assumptions in using this source of data to locate an isolationist region is that the congressman's ear is attuned to his district regularly enough to justify the transferral

in the long run and over a large number of roll calls. The mere bulk of the evidence would tend to offset the occasions when the member of Congress is unrepresentative of the politically active portion (particularly the "foreign affairs public") of his constituency. Members of Congress register the effective opinion on foreign policy, and this is important. Furthermore, by examining the voting pattern in the lower house more closely than that in the Senate one would tend to narrow the margin of error, if the representative is assumed to be usually closer to his district than the senator is to his state-wide constituency. Congressional voting records, primarily votes on issues in the House of Representatives, provide the basic data used here for finding the region of isolationism.

A Region of Isolationism? Seventy-three roll call votes in the House and eighty-eight in the Senate were used in this analysis. They were distributed over the eighteen-year period as follows:

Congress	Number of Record Votes	
	House	Senate
73rd (1933–1934)	4	2
74th (1935–1936)	2	7
75th (1937–1938)	4	4
76th (1939–1940)	10	11
77th (1941–1942)	9	9
78th (1943–1944)	5	7
79th (1945–1946)	12	14
80th (1947–1948)	9	11
81st (1949–1950)	16	23
	73	88

Each of these roll calls was on a foreign affairs issue that divided the more isolationist element from the less isolationist (or more internationalist) group. The issues brought forth record votes on American participation in international organizations, on neutrality, foreign aid programs, the trade agreements program, lend-lease, and on similar foreign policy issues of the period. Such issues were frequently the centers of many amendments and moves of parliamentary strategy. When the votes on such side issues caused more than a minor change in voting alignment, they were used in this analysis together with the vote on the main issue. When the number of such supplementary roll calls warranted, a sampling process was used in order to avoid over-weighting the total number of votes tabulated in favor of one type of issue. The votes in the House of Representatives divide into subjects as follows: reciprocal trade, 10; aid to Allies (pre-1942), 13; international organization, 16; aid programs involving large appropriations, 33. There are other subject divisions that could be made, but this division shows that no one issue dominated. The issues involving authorizations for costly foreign aid included such questions as pre-World War II aid to the Allies, the European Recovery Program, Greek aid, lend-lease, the British loan and Far Eastern aid. These four subject categories are not mutually exclusive.

The ratio of isolationist votes to total votes cast by a state's representatives can be expressed as a "percentage of isolationism" for that state. This percentage can be compared to the "percentage of isolationism" found in a like manner in other states. The states can then be ranked in order of isolationism, with the state having the highest "percentage of isolationism" ranked as most isolationist. This same procedure can be followed for the Senate or for individual districts in the House of Representatives. Figures I and II present the states ranked according to isolationist strength in the House and Senate respectively for the period 1933–1950. Figure I presents the data derived from roll call votes in the House.

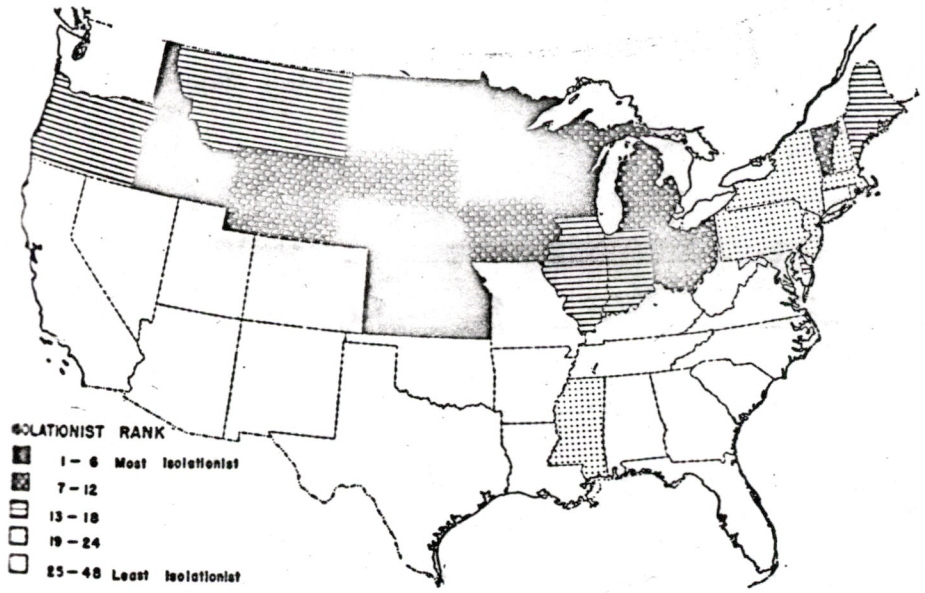

FIG. I. Isolationist Voting by States in the House of Representatives (73rd–81st Congress, 1933–1950).

When examined carefully, the data upon which the map is based support the conclusion that a broad band of isolationist strength existed across the northern portion of the United States as compared to a relative lack of isolationism in the southern and southwestern states. North Dakota was the most isolationist state in the nation. It was followed in order by Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. The existence of this broad northern band of isolationism is the most obvious conclusion drawn from the data. The votes also indicate that a multi-state region of isolationism centered in the North Dakota to Kansas belt. This region included Ohio in the East and Idaho in the West and reached as far South as Kansas. Included in this region are eleven of the twelve most isolationist states, only Vermont being excluded.

The Senate voting records (Figure II) suggest a slight modification of these conclusions. The northern half of the nation is again distinctly more isolationist

than the South. However, the region of isolationism in Figure II, though roughly similar, is not exactly the same as that found in House voting. North Dakota is again first in isolationist rank as it was in the voting in the House. Nebraska, Kansas, Ohio, Idaho, and Nevada follow in order. Thus four states—North Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, and Idaho—are among the first six isolationist states in each house of Congress. In the Senate, as in the House, the core of isolationism in this period centered in the North Dakota to Kansas area.

The votes in the House of Representatives are more useful and more accurate for this analysis of the isolationist region than are the votes in the Senate.

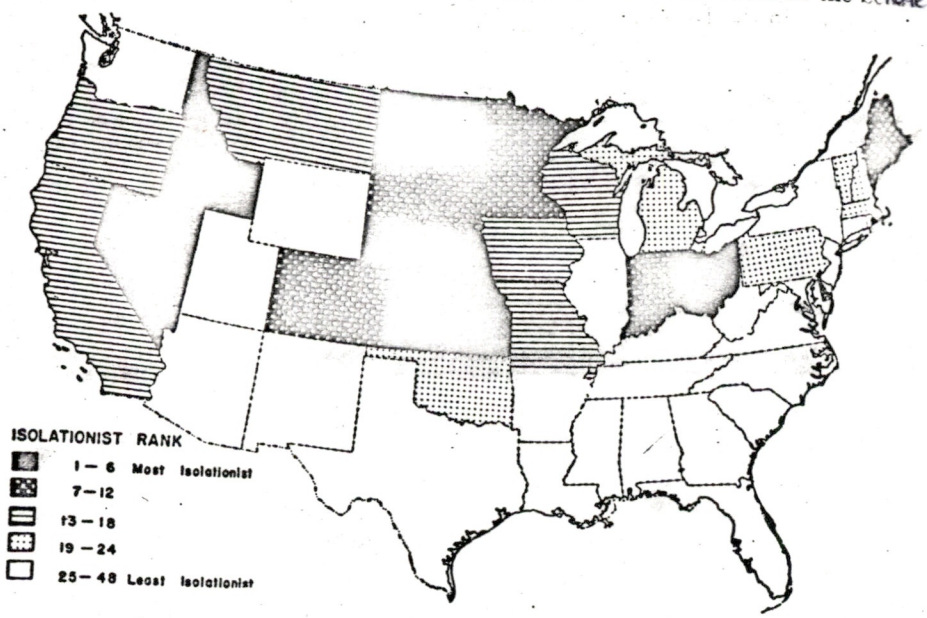

FIG. II. Isolationist Voting by States in the Senate (73rd–81st Congress, 1933–1950).

Not only are the basic assumptions more sound in the case of the lower house, but also the votes can be examined for the congressional district, a smaller and more useful unit than the state. Figures III and IV show the districts in order of isolationist strength. Redistricting after the 1940 census necessitates dividing the period into two maps. These district maps must be viewed with some caution, since they are obviously not based on population, while the statistics presented on them are basically related to population density. Thus within the state of New York a small dot on the map represents an area including as many as twenty districts, while one district of roughly equal population is represented by an area twenty times as large. Not only must this differential be kept in mind in viewing individual states, but it must be observed in comparing low population states such as Montana with heavily populated eastern states.

It is obvious from Figures III and IV that no one region of the nation had a monopoly on isolationism in the 1933–1950 period. Heavily isolationist dis-

tricts appeared in states from California to Maine and were found, in many cases, adjoining non-isolationist districts in their own states. The district breakdown does show, as did the maps by states, that isolationism existed in a northern belt and was relatively weak in the southern half of the nation. Proximity to the coast was not an absolute deterrent to isolationism. Some districts in coastal states elected and constantly reelected isolationist representatives, while some inland districts were represented throughout the period by non-isolationists. However, there were relatively more isolationist members of the House representing inland districts within the Ohio-Idaho region than districts in coastal states, as can be seen in the state totals represented in Figure I.

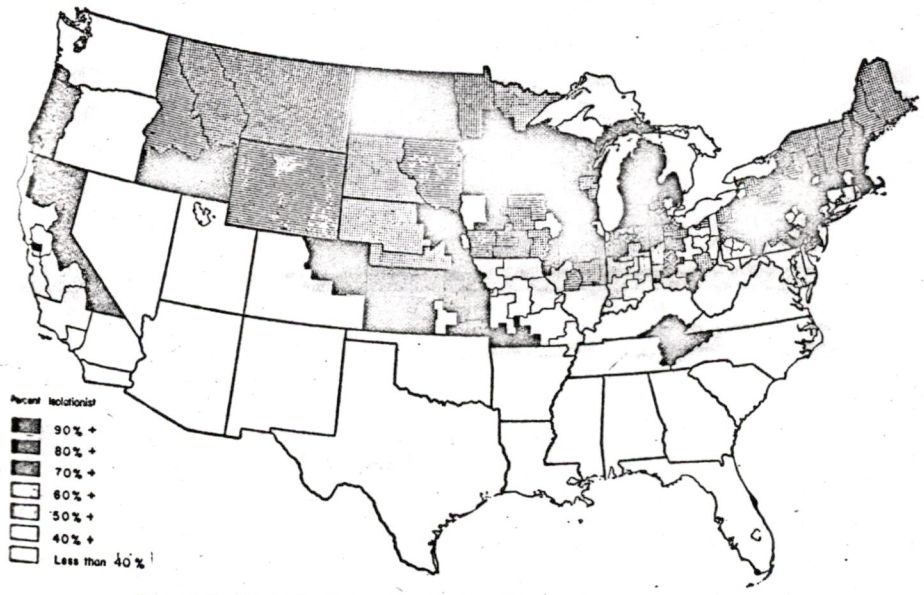

FIG. III. Isolationist Votes in the House of Representatives, 1933–1942, by Congressional District.

It is not possible to locate any large regions of isolationism on the maps based on districts. This is due in part to the area, rather than population, basis of the map. But even if one could overcome this handicap, the patchwork of isolationist districts next to non-isolationist districts indicates that no multi-state regions existed. This patch-quilt pattern disappears when the state figures are used because state percentages are actually averages of the districts within the state, and therefore hide the variations. The maps by districts, the most accurate units, suggest definite limitations to the conclusions drawn from maps by states.

In using House roll call data, controls can be exercised that enable one to make comparisons of state or regional isolationist strength on various types of issues. The region of isolationism identified in Figure I can be further examined by withdrawing roll call data on certain types of issues from the totals and then examining the resultant pattern for shifts in isolationist concentrations. For

example, does the region of isolationism disappear as a region or, perhaps, center in another part of the country when all votes on reciprocal trade issues are excluded from the totals? Do the anti-reciprocal trade congressmen come from a different area than the anti-lend lease congressmen? Is there a region consistently reappearing throughout such variations in the data? It is also possible to divide the data into periods and examine the pattern of isolationist strength for shifts corresponding to time changes. Furthermore, the effect of political party affiliation on the voting pattern can be examined by studying separately the group of roll call votes on bi-partisan issues—those issues on

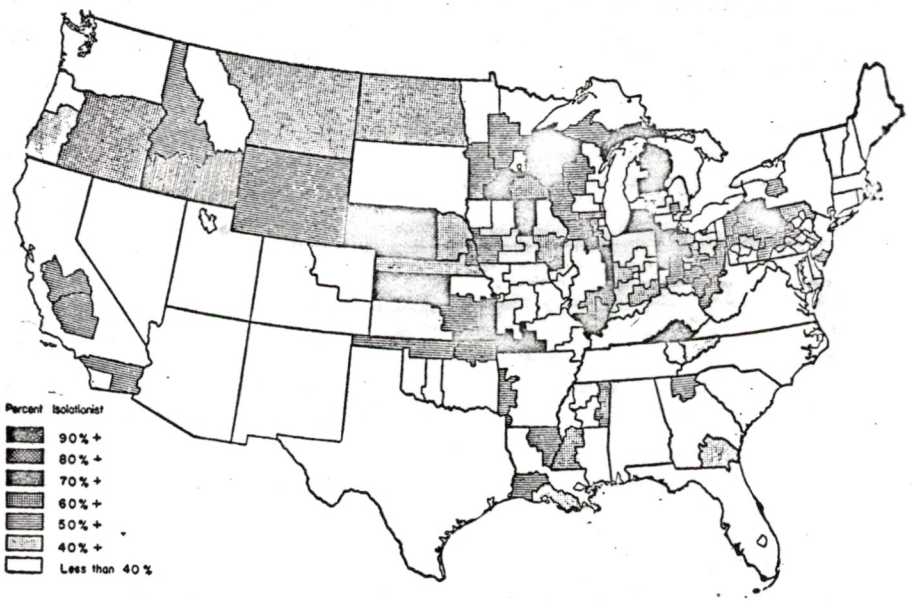

FIG. IV. Isolationist Votes in the House of Representatives, 1943–1950, by Congressional District.

which a majority of both parties voted on one side of the issue. Partisan influence on the data can be minimized by another method, that of studying the pattern of isolationism in the voting records of each party separately. This will show whether there were regions of isolationism within the Republican party and Democratic party in this period.

Analysis of ten roll calls in the House dealing with the Trade Agreements Program reveals a North-South break on this issue similar to the pattern in Figure I. All of the twelve most isolationist states on these ten issues are located north of the Kansas-Illinois-Ohio line. Of the twenty-four most isolationist states on this group of issues, only Florida and Nevada are south of the northern band of isolationism discernible in Figure I. All of the other twenty-two states are in the northern half of the country. Though the basic North-South cleavage follows the overall pattern (Figure I), the regional concentration within the North is considerably different. Two isolationist regions are

easily identified in the reciprocal trade votes, a New England region and a Northwest region. Of the twelve most isolationist states on reciprocal trade issues, four are located in New England (Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Massachusetts). The remaining eight are dispersed in an area reaching from Minnesota to the Pacific Coast. The effect of excluding the data on these ten roll calls from the total tabulation is to make the Ohio to Idaho region an even more pronounced isolationist region than is shown by Figure I.

Data for other groups of issues can be handled in a manner similar to the analysis of reciprocal trade issues, but none reveals as great a deviation from the basic regional pattern. Thus if the votes on issues concerning aid to the Allies, issues concerning United States participation in international organizations, and issues concerning foreign aid or relief programs involving large expenditures are analyzed as separate groups, the results in regional distribution follow a pattern quite similar to the original overall regional pattern in Figure I. With the exception of reciprocal trade issues, the region of isolationist strength remains consistently centered in the North Dakota to Kansas group of states.

The same general consistency is found when the data for the eighteen years are divided into two equal periods. Two exceptions to this general consistency are found, however. Relatively greater isolationism appears in New England before 1942, and increased isolationist inroads into the South appear in the post-1942 period. When the roll calls are divided into three equal time periods these two exceptions become more pronounced. In the 1933–1938 period the four northern New England states are solidly more isolationist than any other grouping of contiguous states in the country. In the 1945–1950 period two states, Louisiana and Mississippi, form an obvious "island" of southern isolationism.

In spite of these deviations from the overall regional pattern of Figure I, there is, with the possible exception of New England in the 1933–1938 period, sound basis for drawing the boundary line of the isolationist region along lines similar to the Ohio-Kansas-Idaho region in each of the shorter periods. Of the twelve most isolationist states, this region contained six states in 1933–1938, eleven in 1939–1944, nine in 1945–1950, eight in 1933–1941, and ten in 1942–1950. The significance of the New England isolationist region appearing in the early years of the period should not be minimized. Fewer issues were tabulated in the early period than in the last six years. Therefore the totals as shown in Figure I are weighted in favor of the later years. Actually, during at least the first third of the eighteen year period, northern New England was as isolationist as any other four-state region in the country.

If any one region of isolationism existed during the total period it was the region consisting of Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, and Idaho. This eleven-state region contained within its boundaries a consistently high number of leading isolationist states, as evidenced by voting in the House of Representatives. There is sufficient evidence in the district data, however, to support the thesis that this region had no monopoly on isolationist congressmen. And there is

evidence to support the conclusion that in the early years of this period there was no single region, and that isolationism shifted from the East to the West during the period. However, the region most consistently isolationist on the greatest number of types of issues and over the longest time period is the eleven-state region depicted in Figure I.

When partisan affiliations are taken into account, the region of isolationism becomes even more pronounced. A total of eighteen bi-partisan issues were used in this tabulation. All occurred in the last six years of the period. On these issues, ones in which a majority of both parties voted on the same side of the question, party affiliation certainly had a minimal effect on voting behavior. When these bi-partisan roll calls are tabulated as a separate group the same regional pattern appears as on the total tabulation. Eleven of the twelve most isolationist states are located in the region defined above.

If another means of eliminating the effect of party affiliation is applied, somewhat the same result occurs. That is, if the votes of Republicans on all issues are tabulated separately from those of Democrats, the regional pattern within each party can be studied. Of the states that frequently sent Republicans to Congress in the eighteen-year period, Nebraska, North Dakota, Illinois, Idaho, Michigan, and Montana ranked as the six most isolationist. Among the states that sent Democrats with some consistency, Idaho, Nebraska, Mississippi, Montana, Iowa, and Minnesota ranked as the most isolationist. These most isolationist states within each party lie in the Ohio-Kansas-Idaho region, Mississippi being the single exception. Elimination of the effects of party does not, therefore, affect the basic regional pattern seen in Figure I.

The Isolationist Region and the Midwest. The region of isolationism having been located, does it coincide with the midwestern region of the country? Actually, it is more difficult to locate the Midwest than it is to locate a region whose boundaries are determined by one criterion, isolationist voting in Congress. As previously indicated, there are many "Midwests." Whose definition is to be accepted? It is possible to derive a "consensus Midwest" from the many definitions used in lay and professional literature. There is a basic core of agreement, a group of states which rarely fall outside of varying definitions of the region. Included in this core are six states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana. Surrounding this core are six states, part or all of which are sometimes included in the Midwest. These can be considered the midwestern fringe states: Ohio, Missouri, North and South Dakota, Kansas, and Nebraska.

How does this consensus Midwest compare with the isolationist region? The isolationist region extends further to the west than does the Midwest. Idaho and Wyoming lie outside of the midwestern region. Furthermore, the core of the isolationist region—Nebraska, Kansas, and the Dakotas—lies in the western fringe of the Midwest. One state in the Midwest fringe, Missouri, is not included in the isolationist region; and two core states of the consensus Midwest, Illinois and Indiana, are outside the most isolationist group. The two regions do overlap, but they do not coincide, nor is either region wholly included in the other.

In summary, what can be said about a regional pattern of isolationism in the period studied? First, the most obvious concentration of isolationist sentiment, as represented in Congress, was in a broad band reaching from coast to coast covering almost all of the northern half of the country. The absence of isolationist strength in the South and Southwest was in striking contrast to its presence in states of the North. This was generally true when partisan influence was eliminated from the data as well as when groups of issues and time periods were studied separately.

Second, the northern states themselves showed considerable variation in isolationist strength within state boundaries. Some of the most isolationist districts were located in Pennsylvania, New York, and Michigan in proximity to non-isolationist districts. Almost all eastern, midwestern and western coast states contained some districts ranking high in isolationist strength. Distance from the ocean was no accurate gauge of isolationist strength.

Third, with certain qualifications, a region of isolationism is discernible in the eleven-state area that includes Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming and Idaho. The most isolationist center of this region lies in four states, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. The qualifications on this definition of a region of isolationism are important enough to require restating. First, in the early portion of the eighteen years, New England was a second strong region within the northern band of isolationism. Secondly, throughout the period one or more very isolationist states existed outside the region. For example, when the Democratic votes were analyzed as a separate group, Mississippi and Louisiana appeared high in isolationist rank. A final qualification is suggested by the analysis of the data by districts. This analysis by smaller units makes it obvious that no region held a monopoly on isolationist sentiment, nor did the eleven-state region appear as an area of uniformly strong isolationist sentiment.

Fourth, the region of isolationism so defined fits only partially the midwestern region of the United States as defined in a consensus. The two regions overlap, but they do not coincide.

Non-Regional Factors. Are there factors other than regional location which characterize isolationist districts? Is there some socio-economic or political factor which is consistently found in an isolationist district but is absent from the anti-isolationist area? A region of isolationism was found to exist, with limitations, in the Ohio to Idaho portion of the country. Perhaps a non-regional correlate exists which will suggest further restrictions on a geographic explanation of isolationism based on the existence of such a geographic region.

It is possible to compare population characteristics such as urban-rural residence, economic level, educational level, percentage of foreign-born, and partisan affiliation of isolationist areas to non-isolationist districts. In each comparison, the counties of the isolationist and anti-isolationist districts within the same state can each be compared to the state average for the particular factor. By using the state average and comparing districts within the same state, variations due to regional differences can be eliminated. For example,

the educational level in counties composing the two or three most isolationist districts in Illinois can be compared to the average educational level of the whole state. If 20 per cent of the isolationist counties have a higher educational level than the state, this "percentage higher" can be compared to a similarly determined percentage figure for the non-isolationist counties in Illinois. This procedure can be repeated in other states where a wide range in degrees of isolationism existed, permitting a comparison of the educational level of the most isolationist counties (components of the most isolationist districts) with the non-isolationist.[13]

Turning first to a consideration of rural-urban residence, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that rural areas were more frequently represented by isolationist voting congressmen than were urban areas in the same state. Twenty four percent of the counties composing selected heavily isolationist districts were more densely populated than their respective states; the comparable figure for anti-isolationist counties within the same states was 34 per cent.[14] This difference of ten percentage points corresponds to results of other comparisons. When the isolationism of heavily populated areas in fourteen states was compared to the strength of isolationism in the state as a whole, in only one case was the urban community more isolationist than the state as a whole.[15] In the other thirteen states, on the other hand, state exceeded urban isolationism by a sizeable margin. In four instances the state percentage of isolationism was more than twice that of the urban area. In six other cases, the state percentage was more than 50 per cent greater than the urban figure.

Another means of comparison can be used. If the strongly isolationist districts are classified as metropolitan, urban, semi-urban, and rural, the totals in each category can be compared with those in similar classifications of non-isolationist districts.[16] This comparison is presented in the following table:

[13] Statistics on socio-economic characteristics of the population, unless otherwise stipulated, were obtained from the Census of 1940.

[14] Twenty-three districts with high "percentage isolationist" rankings were selected for this and other similar comparisons. These districts were located in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. The same number of relatively anti-isolationist districts were selected from the same states. The anti-isolationist districts contained fewer counties than did the isolationist districts.

[15] The urban areas and states used were as follows: Los Angeles County and San Francisco, California; Cook County (Chicago), Illinois; Wayne County (Detroit), Michigan; New York City, New York; Philadelphia and Alleghany County (Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania; Boston, Chelsea, and Cambridge, Massachusetts; Milwaukee County, Wisconsin; Denver, Colorado; Baltimore, Maryland; Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota; Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio; Birmingham, Alabama; St. Louis, Missouri; Louisville, Kentucky.

[16] The classifications are used by Arthur Holcombe, *The Political Parties of Today* pp. 62–63. Metropolitan districts are those formed in or containing an urban area consisting of a city of at least 200,000 inhabitants. An urban district contains a city of at least 100,000 population; semi-urban districts contain a city of at least 50,000 persons but none of 100,000. Rural districts have no city as large as 50,000. In this comparison the isolationist districts were all those having a percentage of isolationism greater than 80 per cent

SELECTED ISOLATIONIST AND ANTI-ISOLA
ACCORDING TO DEGR

	Total Districts Classified	Per Metro Dist
(1933–1942)		
Isolationist	63	15
Anti-Isolationist	42	47
(1943–1950)		
Isolationist	16	0
Anti-Isolationist	24	79

Metropolitan and urban districts
In many semi-urban and in all rural
The division into two periods was
the 1940 census. In both periods, the
are found in relatively larger numb
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The anti-isolationist districts had less tha
same states as the isolationist districts.

[17] Most opinion polls show that high
sentiments. Of thirty-nine postwar poll
affairs questions, thirty-six found colle
educated. In thirty-eight of the polls hig
isolationist than grade school educated.

SELECTED ISOLATIONIST AND ANTI-ISOLATIONIST CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO DEGREE OF URBAN POPULATION

	Total Districts Classified	Per Cent Metropolitan Districts	Per Cent Urban Districts	Per Cent Semi-Urban Districts	Per Cent Rural Districts
(1933–1942)					
Isolationist	63	15.8	12.7	25.5	46.0
Anti-Isolationist	42	47.6	16.7	2.4	33.3
(1943–1950)					
Isolationist	16	0.0	6.2	25.0	68.8
Anti-Isolationist	24	79.2	8.3	4.2	8.3

Metropolitan and urban districts are those controlled by urban populations. In many semi-urban and in all rural districts, the rural population dominates. The division into two periods was made necessary by redistricting following the 1940 census. In both periods, the districts dominated by urban populations are found in relatively larger numbers in the anti-isolationist group. On the other hand, the isolationist group is dominated in each period by a preponderance of semi-urban and rural districts. The obviously frequent co-existence of isolationist strength and rural population dominance in a district points to the same conclusion as stated previously. Non-urban and rural areas are more frequently isolationist in Congress than urban and metropolitan communities.

A second non-locational factor, economic level, shows little relationship to isolationist strength. Whether one defines economic level in terms of rural level of living or of per capita income, analysis of congressional districts indicates little correlation between it and isolationism. Comparing the county rural level of living index to the respective state index in each case, we find that the indices of the isolationist counties are higher only two per cent more frequently than those of anti-isolationist counties. Per capita income comparisons yield similar results.

Educational level shows a somewhat more positive correlation with strength of isolationism than did economic level. In contrast with public opinion poll findings,[17] analysis of the districts found to be isolationist or anti-isolationist leads to the conclusion that isolationism tends to be stronger in the more highly educated communities. Comparing the portion of the population in isolationist counties that finished the fifth grade and the percentage that finished high school to the similar part of the population in the non-isolationist counties, the isolationist counties were found to be more highly educated in both cases. Al-

The anti-isolationist districts had less than 5 per cent isolationism and were located in the same states as the isolationist districts.

[17] Most opinion polls show that higher education is correlated with less isolationist sentiments. Of thirty-nine postwar polls presenting educational breakdowns on foreign affairs questions, thirty-six found college educated less isolationist than high school educated. In thirty-eight of the polls high school educated persons were found to be less isolationist than grade school educated.

most 49 per cent of the isolationist counties were above their respective state levels for fifth grade education; only 34 per cent of the anti-isolationist countries bettered their comparable state percentages. The comparable figures for high school education are 28.4 per cent higher for the isolationist and 20.4 per cent for the anti-isolationist counties.

There is little doubt that some correlation existed between the degree of isolationism in the 1933–1950 period in a particular community and the strength of certain foreign-born elements or foreign white stock in that community. A general correlation existed but there were many exceptions. The maps (Figures III and IV) showing isolationism by districts were compared to Census Bureau maps showing the proportion of the natives of various countries to the total population in 1890. One census map showing "The Proportion of the Natives of the Germanic Nations to the Aggregate Population," was very useful in these comparisons. Similar maps for Irish and Scandinavian elements were used, as well as maps based on the censuses of 1910 and 1920.[18] Close comparison of the census maps to Figures III and IV made it possible to study the pattern of isolationism in relation to the distribution of foreign-born population. Other census data on foreign-born and foreign white stock in isolationist and non-isolationist counties were also useful.

In some areas a high degree of correlation was found. For example, the most isolationist areas of California, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Minnesota were relatively heavily populated with persons of Germanic origins. In general, the broad isolationist areas of the northern and eastern parts of the country were more heavily settled by Germanic peoples.

Important exceptions were found, however, and when smaller areas were analyzed more carefully, the more heavily German population did not always appear as the most isolationist, nor did all isolationist districts show a significant foreign-born population. For example, the isolationist areas of Tennessee and Kentucky appeared to be uninfluenced by foreign stock. Idaho and North Dakota, most isolationist of all, appear as relatively unpopulated by foreign born of German background. In Missouri, heavily Germanic St. Louis is the least isolationist portion of the state. The southern portions of Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana show similar inconsistencies.

Comparisons with other than Germanic population maps yielded similar exceptions to the general correlation. The Irish element in New England is an example. If Irish birth or parentage could be considered a link to isolationist sentiments in the period of American friendship and cooperation with England, one would expect to find isolationism stronger in heavily Irish southern New England than in northern New England where the Irish element is relatively sparse. However, Massachusetts was less isolationist than either Vermont, New Hampshire, or Maine, each of which is relatively uninfluenced by foreign-born population. This is not to suggest, however, that a general overlapping

[18] These maps appear in *Statistical Atlas of the United States* (for the Eleventh Census 1890, Washington, D. C., 1898), Maps 56–61. See also similar statistical atlases based on the 1910 census, plates 146–184, and the 1920 census, plates 147–180.

Irish and isolationist areas was not common. It merely supports the conclusion that the generally close relationship of certain foreign-born and foreign-stock population elements with isolationist strength had many important exceptions.[19]

Partisan affiliation was closely related to isolationist voting. Of all votes cast by Democrats, 10.8 per cent were on the isolationist side. More than 57 per cent of the Republican votes supported the isolationist position. As indicated above, the partisan factor seemed to have a relatively small effect on the regional location of isolationism; that is, even with party influence eliminated the same region of isolationism was definable from the data.

In summary, this examination of non-regional factors suggests additional limitations on the importance of geographic region as a factor in isolationist strength. It seems clear that regional concentration of isolationism in the 1933 to 1950 period was but one of several identifiable characteristics: rural-urban residence, foreign origin or background, partisan affiliation and, to a lesser extent, educational level are characteristics joining together the isolationist districts and separating them, in some cases only slightly, from non-isolationist areas. Partisan affiliation and rural-urban residence were the strongest non-regional factors. Republicans were considerably more isolationist than Democrats. Rural areas were, with rare exception, more isolationist than urban districts within the same state. Though analysis does not indicate any relationship between economic level and isolationism, it does reveal a higher level of education in isolationist districts than in nearby non-isolationist districts. With important exceptions, heavily Germanic population areas tended to be more isolationist than neighboring areas of different national origins. Analyses of other nationality groups indicate similarly general relationships with isolationism and also suggest important limitations to any generalizations on this one factor. Thus, not only is the definition of a region of isolationism surrounded by doubt; but, if defined, the importance of the regional factor is lessened by the fact that other, non-regional correlates are readily discernible.

This analysis allows one only to speculate as to the causes of isolationism. No cause and effect relationship, no explanation of isolationism, can be stated firmly from these conclusions. But if one were to speculate, the soundest explanation would undoubtedly lie in the direction of a combination of these factors—regional and socio-economic—and others. Certainly no single or double factor explanation is possible. Each of these needs further investigation if we are better to understand isolationism, and, more generally, the attitudes of Americans toward foreign affairs.

[19] Findings in this research do not support the relatively strong statement of relationship between isolationism and national origins found in Samuel Lubell's works, *n. 1.* Though the relationship exists, it is but one of several such correlations, and does not seem to be the strongest.